

Administration of Barack Obama, 2016

Statement on the Observance of Passover

April 22, 2016

Michelle and I send our best wishes to everyone celebrating Pesach in the United States, in the State of Israel, and around the world.

One of Passover's most powerful rituals is its tradition of storytelling: millions of Jewish families, friends, and even strangers sitting together and sharing the inspirational tale of the Exodus. Led by a prophet and chased by an army, sustained by a faith in God, and rewarded with deliverance, the Israelites' journey from bondage to the Promised Land remains one of history's greatest examples of emancipation. This story of redemption and hope, told and retold over thousands of years, has comforted countless Jewish families during times of oppression, echoing in rallying cries for civil rights around the world.

Mah nishtana halailah hazeh? For Michelle and me, this Passover is different from all other Passovers because it will mark our last Seder in the White House, a tradition we have looked forward to each year since hosting the first-ever White House Seder in 2009. We will join millions around the world to celebrate redemption at God's mighty hand and pray for those who still are denied their freedom. We dip the greens of renewal in saltwater to recall the tears of those imprisoned unjustly. As we count the Ten Plagues, we spill wine from our glasses to remember those who suffered and those who still do. And as we humbly sing *dayenu*, we are mindful that even the smallest blessings and slowest progress deserve our gratitude.

Passover gives us all a special opportunity to renew our belief in things unseen even as the future remains uncertain. May this season inspire us all to rededicate ourselves to peace and freedom for all of God's children. From our family to yours, *chag sameach*.

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